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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJ: REACTIONS TO ULUNDI "ALLIANCE"

REF: A. DURBAN 0023 B. DURBAN 0020

1. SUMMARY: ASIDE FROM THOSE OF THE SAG ITSELF, MOST REACTIONS TOWARDS THE ALLIANCE FORMED AT THE JAN. 11 ULUNDI CONFERENCE (REF A) HAVE BEEN FAVORABLE. SOME FORM OF SAG ACTION TOWARD THE ALLIANCE AND ITS ACTIVITIES IS, HOWEVER, WIDELY ANTICIPATED. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESS REACTION. THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NATAL PRESS (AND TWO OF THE MAJOR ENGLISH SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS) UNIFORMLY VIEWED THE ULUNDI ALLIANCE AS A SERIOUS EFFORT BY BLACKS TO WORK FOR A NEW POLITICAL DISPENSATION THROUGH NON-VIOLENT MEANS. MOST PAPERS NOTED A POTENTIAL FOR FINDING COMMON GROUND BETWEEN OPPRESSED BLACKS AND WHITE OPPOSITION PARTIES. FURTHER COMMENT WAS HEDGED
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PENDING EVIDENCE OF HOW THE ALLIANCE INTENDED TO APPROACH ITS STATED TASK OF FORMULATING A COMMON STRATEGY AGAINST APARTHEID. THE INEVITABILITY OF SAG OBSTRUCTION WAS WIDELY ANTICIPATED, BUT SEVERAL EDITORIALS EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT CHOOSE TO REPRESS AN EFFORT BY MODERATE BLACKS TO WORK THROUGH NON-VIOLENT MEANS. A NUMBER OF INTERPRETIVE ARTICLES NOTED THAT THE ACTION TO FORM THE ALLIANCE WAS A

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NORMAL RESULT OF NEW PRESSURES ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN REACTION TO THE BANNINGS OF OCTOBER AND THE NAT ELECTORAL SWEEP OF NOVEMBER 30.

3. GOVERNMENT REACTION: IN ADDITION TO AN INTIMIDATING SERIES OF ARTICLES IN THE SAG'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE MOUTHPIECE, THE CITIZEN (REF B), THE SABC CARRIED CRITICISM OF THE NEW ALLIANCE BY THE COLORED LEADER, W.J. BERGINS. IT ALSO ATTACKED CHIEF BUTHELEZI'S "EMPIRE BUILDING" IN AN EDITORIAL COMMENT USUALLY EXPRESSIVE OF OFFICIAL SAG OPINION. BEYOND THESE INDICATIONS OF DISPLEASURE, THE SAG HAS NOT SPOKEN OUT MORE DEFINITELY.

4. OTHER GROUPS:

A. NATAL INDIAN CONGRESS. ALTHOUGH ONE OF ITS LEADERS (DR. FAROOK MEER) WAS ASSAILED BY BUTHELEZI DURING A ULUNDI CONFERENCE SPEECH, THE NIC WAS PROMPT TO EXPRESS ITS SUPPORT FOR THE STAND TAKEN BY ALLIANCE PARTICIPANTS. NIC HAS NOT YET SAID WHETHER IT WOULD ITSELF MOVE TO ASSOCIATE WITH THE ALLIANCE. HOWEVER, IT TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY OF ITS STATEMENT TO CALL ON THE THREE ALLIANCE MEMBERS TO DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM THE APARTHEID SYSTEM BY ENDING THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE HOMELANDS, CRC AND SAIC.

B. SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN COUNCIL (SAIC). CHAIRMAN J.N.
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REDDY EXPRESSED MILD PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR THE ALLIANCE BUT SAID THE SAIC COULD NOT TAKE A POSITION UNTIL AFTER THE INDIAN ELECTIONS, WHICH ARE NOT EXPECTED UNTIL 1979. (THE REFORM PARTY OF Y.S. CHINSAMY, WHICH DID PLAY A MAJOR PART IN THE ULUNDI CONFERENCE, CONTROLS THEN OF THIRTY SAIC SEATS AND IS THE MAJOR ELECTORAL OPPOSITION OF REDDY AND HIS RELATIVELY CONSERVATIVE SAIC SUPPORTERS.)

C. PROGRESSIVE FEDERAL PARTY. PFP LEADER COLIN EGLIN ANNOUNCED IN CAPE TOWN THAT THE PFP WOULD NOT JOIN THE NEW ALLIANCE BUT WOULD MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH IT, IN THE SAME FASHION AS THE PFP HAD HELD CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS WITH INKATHA OVER THE PAST YEAR. EGLIN INDICATED THAT THE PFP WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY ATTEMPTING TO HOLD FURTHER JOINT CONSULTATIONS WITH INKATHA.

5. INDIVIDUAL REACTIONS:

A. ARMICHAND RAJBANSI: REPRESENTING THE SMALL AND INSECURE INDIAN MINORITY, RAJBANSI (ONE OF THE REFORM PARTY'S REPRESENTATIVES ON THE INTERIM COORDINATING COMMITTEE) WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED BY THE MEETING. HE SAW THE ALLIANCE AS A REVIVAL OF THE SPIRIT OF THE CONGRESS ALLIANCE AND IMPLIED IT COULD THEREFORE STRENGTHEN

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INDIAN TIES WITH OTHER BLACKS. HE SAID THE RESOLUTIONS HAD
BEEN CAREFULLY WORDED TO AVOID VIOLATING THE POLITICAL INTER-
FERENCE ACT AND TO STRESS THAT WHILE THE ALLIANCE WOULD PAVE THE
WAY FOR A NATIONAL CONVENTION, THE SAG MUST (AND PRESUMABLY WILL)
CONVENE IT IN RESPONSE TO VARIOUS PRESSURES INCLUDING INCREASED
ONE FROM THE U.S. HE SAID THE ALLIANCE WELCOMED NEW MEMBERS,
BUT EACH APPLICANT WOULD BE JUDGED ON ITS MERITS. THUS THE
NIC WOULD HAVE A VALID CLAIM, BUT THE COLORED FREEDOM PARTY AND
SAIC CONSERVATIVES WOULD NOT. ALSO, HE STATED, SINCE THE
RESOLUTION USES THE PHRASE "OPPRESSED PERSONS", HE DOUBTED THE
PROGREFS COULD JOIN SINCE THEY WERE "UNOPPRESSED WHITES".

B. DR. DENIS MADIDE, KWAZULU COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH
MINISTER, PARTICIPATED IN THE ULUNDI TALKS AND WAS CHOSEN
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FOR THE 10 MEMBER INTERIM COORDINATING COMMITTEE.) (HE WILL
VISIT THE U.S. IN JUNE ON AN IV). MADIDE STRESSED HIS SURPRISE
WITH THE HARMONY OF VIEWS AND THE UNEXPECTED COOPERATION EXHIBITED
BY ALL THREE GROUPS. HE SAID ONLY THE INDIANS EXPRESSED SOME
RESERVATIONS RE CHOOSING BUTHELEZI AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE.
HE SAID THE INDIANS WERE FEARFUL THE SELECTION OF BUTHELEZI
INCREASED THE LIKELIHOOD OF SAG REACTION BUT QUICKLY CAME AROUND
WHEN FACED WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS.

C. FRANK MARTIN (NRP LEADER OF THE NATAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
AND AUTHOR OF THE "NATAL TURNHALLE" CONCEPT). MARTIN REBUTTED
A NEWSPAPER ASSERTION THAT THE NEW ALLIANCE KILLED OFF
CHANCES FOR EGIONAL POWER-SHARING INITIATIVES IN NATAL. HE
THOUGH ANYTHING DONE UNDER THE NATAL TURNHALLE OR "INDABA"
FORMULA COULD BE COMPLEMENTARY TO ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN BY THE
ALLIANCE, NOTING PARTICULARLY THAT MUCH OF THE "INDABA" IDEA
DEALS INITIALLY WITH PRACTICAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS. MARTIN
SAID THE NATAL EXCO NOW ARE COMPLETING THEIR "INDABA" PROPOSAL-
MEMORANDUM FOR PRIME MINISTER VORSTER'S CONSIDERATION. MARTIN
SAID HE PLANS TO CONVEY THE MEMO PERSONALLY TO VORSTER LATER
THIS MONTH.
FARBER

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